

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

(Mr. Jamieson) has explained to the hon. member and to the House on different occasions, most recently on January 22, that he has had direct discussions with the CNR on these recommendations. He has expressed hope of what would appear to be a sympathetic response by the company in their discussions.

There are, as all hon. members know, complicating factors in that different aspects of the pension issue are a matter for collective bargaining. While it would not be appropriate to comment on this particular point, the subject was covered in the House by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) in a reply to the hon. member from Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg) on January 20, and again on January 22 by the Minister of Transport in a reply to the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow). In responding to this adjournment proceeding, the Minister of Transport has asked me to express to the hon. member and to the House that he is optimistic about this subject and very hopeful that progress will be forthcoming at an early date.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS—DISCONTINUANCE OF DINING CAR SERVICE, OTTAWA-MONTREAL

**Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, some time ago Canadian National Railways announced it was going to discontinue the dining car service on their passenger trains between Montreal and Ottawa. When the CNR made that announcement, several of us in this House protested. I personally approached the president of the CNR, the president of the Canadian Transport Commission and the minister. Hon. members protested because, to begin with, these trains travel at the breakfast hour and the supper hour and have been receiving very heavy patronage. As a matter of fact, I travel on these trains very often and it is not uncommon for me to have to wait up to half an hour before I can get into the dining car.

In addition, many people use this train between Ottawa and Montreal—a service between the national capital and Canada's metropolis—because the highway is so bad that it is almost impossible to drive upon it safely. I think someone wrote an article recently pointing out that this stretch of highway has had the highest rate of accidents and deaths in Canada for the last few years. We based our protest also on the fact that more people would be put out of work at this time of heavy unemployment if this service were withdrawn.

In posing my question to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) last Friday, I asked whether he had received any further answer from the CNR on this matter and he replied he had not. At that time I had not received any answer from the CNR either, but today I received an answer from the president of the CNR in which he stated that despite the use of the service, the CNR is sustaining a loss of \$300,000 annually. I am not suggesting that the government of Canada should subsidize people's meals on this service to the tune of \$300,000 a year. But I am wondering whether the railway has really looked into alternate methods of providing dining car service. I think many people would be willing to pay

[Mr. Mahoney.]

an additional amount to receive a good meal in the morning and at supper time. Has the company investigated the possibility of giving out a concession for this service?

What really disturbs me is this. I support what has been said by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). I was a member of the transport committee which put forward the report on pensions, and what bothers me is the way the CNR disregards the wishes of the elected representatives of the people. It seems to me that the CNR should not only administer this national railway in an economical and efficient manner, but should also administer it with a social conscience. I am not convinced that they do this. They are not doing this with respect to pension plans, they are not doing it when they take off a dining car service at a time like this.

The minister's representative is here tonight, and through him I ask the CNR to reconsider this whole decision. I ask them to reconsider whether there might not be a way of providing this service and in particular I ask them to pay more attention to the fact that they are a national railway. They should serve the needs of Canadian people. When they come here from time to time and ask for money through a finance bill, we should have the right, as members of Parliament did in the seventeenth century in England, to refuse them money until they deal with our grievances.

• (10:10 p.m.)

**Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), is very much aware of the decision of Canadian National Railways to adjust food service facilities on the Montreal-Ottawa passenger service effective today. It is understood that the adjustments, including the specific one mentioned by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), were designed to rationalize the Montreal-Ottawa service. They include revised arrival and departure times at both cities, the use of rail-liner equipment on several trains and reduced club car fares. The dining car service, which is extremely expensive to operate, is being replaced by hot snack and bar service facilities.

As the hon. member knows, the Canadian Transport Commission is also aware of this matter. In reference to the National Transportation Act, this decision is one which the railways are free to make without coming to the commission for prior approval. The Canadian Transport Commission would, of course, be required, subject to the terms of section 315 of the Railway Act relating to the adequacy and suitability of accommodation and incidental service, to investigate complaints respecting the change.

I assure the hon. member that I would be pleased to bring his representations to the attention of the Minister of Transport, who will no doubt refer them to the government-owned railway for its consideration.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** That will be a big help!